



V I S I B L E
T H I N K I N G



Eastover Elementary

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To the Michigan Association for Computer Users in Learning,

I am writing to offer my enthusiastic nomination of Nancy Conn for the MACUL PK-12 Technology Using Teacher of the Year Award. Nancy Conn is the Spanish teacher at Eastover Elementary School, where I serve as principal. I have worked with Nancy since 2005, so I am well aware of her extraordinary abilities as a teacher and technology leader.

Walking through the halls at Eastover, you can always tell if a class has just left the Spanish room. The students always have smiles on their faces, seem energized, and are either humming or chatting about the cool thing they just did in Spanish class. Nancy's students are immersed in the Spanish language and culture through music, movement, art, dance, and of course, technology. Students are always exploring, taking risks, creating, and "playing" in her classroom. This is the way I wish I had learned Spanish.

Nancy Conn is not just a fantastic Spanish teacher. She is a fantastic teacher, period. Nancy Conn is an expert at providing rich and authentic learning experiences for her students. She often integrates her Spanish curriculum with the general education grade level curriculum to provide a more meaningful context for learning Spanish. In Nancy's classroom, students learn Spanish words that apply to their other learning and to their lives, rather than learning Spanish in isolation. She ensures that her students experience how Spanish can be used beyond the school walls. Students role-play, make videos, communicate with Pen Pals, use iPad apps, make books, sing songs, and other activities that enable them to use their Spanish skills in fun and authentic ways.

Nancy Conn is a master at differentiated instruction. Eastover Elementary School is a Title I K-4 School that also happens to host two satellite learning programs for students who need additional support (Academic Resource Program and Deaf & Hard of Hearing Program). Due to Eastover's diverse student population, Nancy Conn has to meet the needs of all different types of learners with all different types of learning styles. To do this, Nancy uses a multidisciplinary approach to encourage, engage, and empower her students. Students are moving, interacting, creating, exploring, at their own level and pace. While Nancy draws upon the multiple intelligences to meet individual learning preferences, her strength is using educational technology in the classroom. Technology is used to keep students engaged and focused, monitor individual student progress, reinforce concepts, enrich curriculum for advanced students, and adapt activities to help struggling students. Her integration of educational technology is never a distraction. Rather, technology is used carefully, thoughtfully, and is always utilized in a way that enhances instruction and student engagement.



VISIBLE
THINKING



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It is a pleasure working with Nancy and I love having her as a part of my staff. She exemplifies the lifelong learner spirit and models the attitude and commitment necessary to be a true master teacher. She asks great questions and is always eager to hear new ideas or seek out best practices. Not only is she a technology pioneer in her classroom, but she motivates her peers to use technology in their classrooms as well. Other teachers often seek out her advice, suggestions, and help when they want to incorporate more technology into their curriculum. They know that Nancy will be able to explain things in a positive, encouraging, and helpful way. They know that Nancy knows how to use educational technology authentically, rather than just for the sake of using technology.

Nancy's approach to teaching Spanish is by using "full immersion," which means that very little English is spoken in class, if at all. It is remarkable that Nancy uses educational technology as often as she does, given the language constraint in her kindergarten through 4th grade classroom. She truly is fearless when it comes to trying new ways to engage students. I urge you to seriously consider Nancy Conn for this prestigious award. Thank you for your consideration and please feel free to contact me if you would like any additional information.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Letitia Tappin'.

Letitia Tappin, Principal